

Self-Help

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Department of
Natural Resources

What is Self-Help?

**When communities draw first on
their own resources-human, material
and financial-to solve local problems**

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Why Self-Help?

Reduce cost of infrastructure projects

Reduce wait time for funding and completion of projects

Increase community capacity

Increase community cohesiveness

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Criteria for Self-Help Projects

Potential - does the community have the capacity to make a project work?

Readiness - is the community willing to proceed now?

5 Factors of Potential

1. Sparkplugs
2. Past experience
3. Community cohesiveness
4. Demonstrated competence in needed skills
5. Critical mass of residents

8 Indicators of Readiness

1. Strong local perception of problem
2. Perception that local action is the best solution
3. Community confidence
4. Support of local government

Readiness (continued)

5. No competing priorities
6. Previous assessment of problem
7. Both public and private willingness to pay increased costs
8. Enthusiastic and capable support of the community

**Both Potential and Readiness
must be present and plentiful
to ensure success of any self-
help project**

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Self-Help Strategies

Grouped into:

- Local resource questions
- Connecting to lawyers, engineers, contractors and other professionals
- Action prior to construction
- Transition from construction to operation
- Information and technical assistance

For more information

- **“The Self-Help Handbook for Small Town Water and Wastewater Projects,” by Jane W. Schautz and Christopher M. Conway**
- **The Rensselaerville Institute
Rensselaerville, NY 12147**
- **<http://www.rinstitute.org>**
- **Contact their St. Louis office at
(314) 614-7898**

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Questions?

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